

# Reclaiming Lives

*Governor Christie Believes That No Life Is Disposable And Has A Proven Record Of Protecting And Caring For The Most Vulnerable Among Us*

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"[A]s a father of four children... I can tell you that what I feel in my heart is there but for the grace of God go I. Any one of us from anywhere in this state can have this happen to us, and the loss of a child or a grandchild is an unthinkable tragedy because of how unnatural it is in the course of human events. We expect them to be there for us when we die, not the other way around, and anything that we need to do to be able to give that person the tools to salvage their own lives is something that I believe we should be involved in. That's why I'm proud of what we've done and we're going to continue to work hard to try to do it..."

*-Governor Chris Christie, [April 11, 2013](#)*

## **A SMARTER AND MORE EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO DRUG ADDICTION AND PRISONER RE-ENTRY**

### **Reaffirming That No Life Is Disposable:**

Acting on his belief that every human life is precious, while fulfilling his commitment to emphasize drug rehabilitation efforts and his different approach dealing with drug abuse and addiction, Governor Chris Christie, today, will sign the bipartisan Overdose Protection Act (S2082) into law.

The legislation takes a two-prong approach to help prevent drug overdose deaths in New Jersey:

- Provides legal protection to people who are in violation of the law while they are attempting to help a drug overdose victim;
- Eliminates negative legal action against health care professionals or bystanders who administer overdose antidotes in life-threatening situations.

The bill combines important aspects from the Opioid Antidote and Overdose Prevention Act with the Good Samaritan Act, which Governor Christie recommended changes to in October 2012.

### **Expanding The Drug Court Program For Non-Violent Offenders:**

Last year, Governor Christie followed through on his commitment to take a smarter and more effective approach in how the state treats drug-addicted offenders by signing into law landmark, bipartisan legislation to put in place a statewide, mandatory drug court program. The legislation acted on the principles laid out by Governor Christie– that no life is disposable and that it is a commonsense, fiscal, and moral imperative to help individuals dealing with drug addiction reclaim their lives with treatment, rather than warehousing them in prison.

*In fiscal year 2014, Governor Christie further acts on his commitment by increasing funding by more than **\$7.5 million** for drug court operations and the resulting treatment costs.*

### **Governor Chris Christie Is Building On New Jersey's Strong Record Of Combating Recidivism:**

In November 2011, taking action to build on the nationally recognized success of New Jersey's prisoner re-entry, rehabilitation and prevention programs, Governor Chris Christie outlined an initiative to help even more offenders get the support they need to successfully re-enter society, break the cycle of criminality and lead productive lives.

New Jersey is widely recognized as a national leader in reducing incidents of recidivism and reducing its prison population:

- The state's 11 percent recidivism decline is among the steepest declines of any state according to the Pew Center on the States' State of Recidivism report, "The Revolving Door of America's Prisons."

- Since 1999, New Jersey's prison population has declined more than 20 percent.

#### **Ongoing Program Assessment And A Real-Time Recidivism Database:**

The path forward to improve prisoner re-entry requires the Administration to gauge the successes, failures and the depth of gaps in program delivery – inside and outside of prison. Programming gaps will be rectified by expanding existing, successful programs and hitting capacity thresholds, particularly relating to program delivery within prison.

- Data will be used to populate a real-time recidivism database, which will allow the Administration to track outcomes for individuals and trends and level of effectiveness in programs in a real-time manner.

#### **Expanding The Veterans Haven Program:**

The Christie Administration is furthering support for the expanded Veterans Haven program. The Veterans Transitional Housing Program – Veterans Haven – is a facility for homeless veterans. After being medically evaluated at a VA Medical Center, eligible veterans participate in a long-term program focusing on psychological, social and vocational rehabilitation.

*The Governor's fiscal year 2014 budget is increasing state funding by **\$244,000** as the facility continues to ramp up toward full occupancy.*